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Naval Service Medical News (NSMN) (96-25)

Headline: Navy Medicine Makes AIDS Research Breakthrough
Washington DC (NNS)--Researchers at the Naval Medical Research Institute (NMRI), in Bethesda, MD, have discovered a potential therapy to enhance white blood cell proliferation and prevent or limit HIV viral spread in patients.

The research team, headed by CAPT Carl June, MC, USN, discovered that a way to rapidly grow CD4 T cells (white blood cells), which direct the immune response, in the laboratory. Using the blood of ten patients with intermediate-stage HIV infection, the team discovered that in all ten samples the amount of HIV in the CD4 cells decreased dramatically while the average number of CD4 cells increased 8,000 fold. The CD4 cells obtained after laboratory culture were free of the HIV virus or contained less than when initially obtained from the patients.

The research team, made up of Navy, Army and civilian immunologists and virologists, discovered a method of triggering the CD28 receptor on CD4 cells that could mediate an antiviral effect and prevent the white cells from becoming infected with the HIV virus. The antiviral effect did not require CD8 cells, distinguishing the CD28-mediated effect from previous reports of antiviral effects.

The research team's significant findings include:

- CD4 cells (white blood cells) from the HIV patients can be rapidly grown in the laboratory.
- The amount of HIV in the CD4 cells from the patients decreased dramatically as the cells were grown in the laboratory.
- CD4 cells from uninfected donors are resistant to infection with HIV when treated with CD28 antibodies.
- The CD28 mediated antiviral effect occurred early in the viral life cycle.

A pilot clinical trial to test the safety and feasibility of this approach is planned to start later this summer at NMRI.

This could have applications in preventing the deterioration of immune function that accompanies HIV infection and may have therapeutic use for certain symptoms that result from HIV. The ability to grow white blood cells from patients with HIV infection could serve as a platform for various gene therapy approaches in future clinical trials.

It is important to note that this form of therapy will

probably not be effective for late-stage HIV infection when the patient's CD4 cells have been severely depleted.

The researcher's results are published in this month's issue of Science magazine.

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Headline: NNMC Bethesda Wins Top Ney Award

NNMC Bethesda (NSMN)--National Naval Medical Center (NNMC) Bethesda, MD, is the winner in the large hospital category for the 1996 CAPT Edward F. Ney Memorial Awards.

This year is the first year there has been a competition in the large hospital category.

The Ney Awards were established in 1958 by the Secretary of the Navy and the International Food Service Executives Association to recognize the best food service facilities in the Navy. Hundreds of dining facilities within specific competition categories compete for the title of best general mess.

Presentation of the awards are scheduled for Monday, 12 August 1996 at the Hyatt Regency in Atlanta.

By Jan Davis, Bureau of Surgery and Medicine Public Affairs

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Headline: Naval School of Health Sciences Launches Better "Mousetrap" for Reservists

Bethesda, MD (NSMN)--More than 1,500 Naval Reservists who are in school to become active duty physicians, dentists, optometrists or nurses get paid a lot quicker these days, thanks to a new computer system.

The Reserve Standard Training Administration and Readiness Support for Health Professions (RSTARS(HP)) computer system links with five different systems that are used throughout the Naval Reserve, Navy and Department of Defense to provide all the information the Naval School of Health Sciences (NSHS) needs to get their Reservists quickly and efficiently. Thanks to RSTARS (HA), they get their allowances and pay for school books and equipment, monthly stipend, and Active Duty for Training (AT) sent directly to their banks within two weeks of submitting their paperwork. In the past, it might take as long as six weeks for the students to get their money.

CDR Gary A. Seffel, USNR, was brought on active duty to head this project, which is a prototype for the entire Naval Reserve community.

"This will have a larger application for Reservists," CDR Seffel said. "Eventually, all (drilling) Reservists will use RSTARS to get all their claims and pay deposited directly to their bank."

There are about 96,000 drilling Naval Reservists.

RSTARS has about a hundred data fields, which include such information as their Leave and Earning Statement (LES), home and work addresses, designator, and school.

"This program is great for what we do here," said HM2 Tina M. Stanco, USNR, who has been working with the system

at NSHS for about a year. "It's a much more inclusive system. Before, you had to go to different places to get all the information. It makes life easier, for me personally."

The Reserve Officer Training Corps at colleges and universities across the United States will begin using the new RSTARS system in August.

By Jan Davis, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery Public Affairs

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Headline: Information at Tips of Your Electronic Fingers

BUMED Washington DC (NSMN)--Need information about Medicare, your Social Security Administration taxes, or your military health benefit? The Internet can help.

Medicare and Medicaid information is available with just a few keystrokes on the keyboard. In fact, the 1996 Medicare Handbook, published by the Department of Health and Human Services' Health Care Financing Administration, is available online. Simply go to their HomePage at <http://www.hcfa.gov/>. You'll see their directory for information, and you'll find the handbook under "Forms and Pubs."

The Social Security Administration's (SSA) HomePage also provides terrific information. You can find out benefits information, forms, rulings and even the status of your Social Security taxes -- how much you've paid into the program. The SSA HomePage is located at <http://www.ssa.gov/>. You'll need a secure browser interface (such as Netscape) to get information about your Social Security taxes since your SSN is secured information.

Another great source for information is the Department of Defense (Health Affairs) HomePage at <http://www.ha.osd.mil/>. Information on TRICARE, Health Affairs Policy documents, Persian Gulf Illness, and more is available.

By LT Edie Rosenthal, USN, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery

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Headline: TRICARE Informational Productions Included with Navy & Marine Corps News

Washington, DC (NSMN)--Two ten-minute video productions, one for families of active duty military members and one for retirees and their families, will be distributed throughout the Navy and Marine Corps to help inform our Navy "family" about TRICARE, the military's new health care program.

The productions will follow Navy and Marine Corps News (NMCN), program #629, which will be mailed Friday, 19 July, to 1,200 commands throughout the world. The version of NMCN distributed via AFRTS satellite link, however, will not carry the TRICARE productions. If your command does not receive NMCN, contact your base public affairs to locate a copy of this special videotape.

Copies of the TRICARE productions should be made

locally for widest distribution. The original NMCN videotape with the TRICARE productions should be returned for reuse.

The videotapes are also being distributed to military hospitals and clinics.

TRICARE is being phased in across the country and in Europe. All twelve Regions and Europe are expected to be operational by the end of 1997.

TRICARE represents one of the biggest changes in the way the military provides health care to military family members and retirees and their families in 30 years. It is being implemented to expand access to health care, assure high quality care, control health care costs for both the beneficiary and taxpayer, and improve medical readiness.

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Headline: NMC Portsmouth Sweeps Navy Research Competition

NMC Portsmouth--Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, VA, physicians won both categories at this year's Navy-wide Research Symposium, hosted at NMC Portsmouth. LCDR Joseph Wax, MC, USN, of the OB-GYN Department, took top honors for the staff physician category, and LCDR Timothy Dunlevy, MC, USN, an ENT resident at the hospital, won the resident category.

Wax's study focused on the timing of administration of prophylactic antibiotics during a cesarean delivery. He compared the outcomes of patients receiving prophylaxis before surgery to those of patients receiving prophylaxis after delivery. The study showed there were no differences in either maternal or neonatal infection rates based on timing of antibiotics, and the study does not recommend changing current recommendations.

Dunlevy sought to identify the optimal concentration of epinephrine, a drug commonly used to control bleeding during surgery. Epinephrine in too large a dose can be toxic to the cardiac system. Standard epinephrine concentration used by head and neck surgeons today is 1:100,000. Dunlevy found there was no difference in blood flow reduction in patients receiving 1:100,000, 1:200,000 or 1:400,000 doses of epinephrine. The study recommends a 1:400,000 concentration for head and neck surgery, reducing by one-fourth the previous standard, which should decrease the risk of adverse effects that may be caused by epinephrine.

By LT Merritt Allen, USN, Naval Hospital Portsmouth Public Affairs

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Headline: Miracle Kids and Caregivers Celebrate Life

NMC San Diego--A courtyard reunion with hamburgers, hot dogs, Ronald McDonald, and country music brought together Naval Medical Center San Diego's tiniest patients and those who cared for them recently.

For the thirteenth year, the center, in conjunction with the Armed Services YMCA, VFW Post 6874 and a host of

center staff members and volunteers joined together to celebrate the plucky kids who battled the odds and were graduated from the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU).

The center's courtyard was transformed into a wonderland for these miracle children who watched puppet and magic shows, karate demonstrations, jugglers, and clowns. Awards were presented to the tiniest graduate, the graduates with the longest NICU stay, and the graduate who traveled the greatest distance to attend the reunion.

"The reunion is a celebration of life, which many of these children fought so desperately for. It is also, a unique opportunity for the medical staff to become re-acquainted with these special kids," said Senior Program Director Ms. Cherri Barnswell of the San Diego Armed Services YMCA.

Hospital staff member Ms. Wanda Elliot, a Registered Nurse and the NICU Reunion Founder, agreed, "It's an exciting event where the children are recognized and relationships are renewed. And it's a great morale booster for the staff members."

The Center's NICU has cared for 270 babies since the first of this year.

By Robert Alan Wright, Naval Medical Center San Diego

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Headline: USS JOHN YOUNG Corpsmen Help Rescue Two Mariners

Arabian Gulf (NWSA)--Twice within six days, USS JOHN YOUNG's (DD 973) corpsmen came to the aid of mariners on board the civilian merchant ship M/V Cape Decision in the Arabian Gulf.

Late one June afternoon, a message came across JOHN YOUNG's bridge-to-bridge radio concerning a seriously ill mariner. A 50-year-old man was unconscious, convulsing and appeared to be in cardiac arrest due to toxic exposure.

JOHN YOUNG arrived alongside Cape Decision in minutes and sent two Navy corpsmen to assist. BM3 Ratsamy Nouansacksy navigated the ship's small boat through four-foot seas to reach the vessel. "The seas were rough, but it went very smoothly. It was great being able to save someone's life," he said.

Once on board, YOUNG's Independent Duty Corpsman, HM1 Geraldine Saulnier, and HM3 Troy Goodman administered emergency treatment to stabilize the unconscious man before he was hoisted aboard the JOHN YOUNG's helicopter.

Only one hour and 12 minutes after the original radio call, the patient was at Bahrain International Airport and under the care of emergency personnel. Later, the ship's crew learned that the patient was saved as a direct result of their quick response.

Less than a week later, as JOHN YOUNG was preparing to enter Bahrain for a routine visit, another call was received from Cape Decision for emergency assistance. This time, a mariner had succumbed to the 110 degree, humid Arabian Gulf heat and passed out from an apparent heat stroke.

JOHN YOUNG's helicopter was recalled from an ongoing mission to pick up Saulnier and lower her by hoist to the deck of the Cape Decision. She quickly stabilized the patient.

"We all knew the urgency of the situation and the ultimate goal, but it wasn't until later I realized that this man would see his family again because of our combined efforts," said Officer of the Deck LTJG Nancy Lo, USN.
From USS JOHN YOUNG Public Affairs

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Headline: MSC Officer Saves Lives in Auto Accident

NH Newport, RI--Quick thinking and heroic actions on the part of ENS James Stilley, MSC, USNR, saved the lives of three people recently.

Stilley, a health care administrator at Naval Hospital Newport, RI, was driving home from work when he witnessed a high speed two car accident. He stopped immediately to provide assistance. With both of the vehicles in flames, he attempted to free the three injured parties from their cars, but only succeeded in getting the least injured one out. The severity of the impact trapped the other two individuals.

"I knew that the cars would be completely engulfed in flames in a matter of minutes, with people left inside, and unable to escape," said Stilley. Hurriedly, he flagged down a passing truck, seized its fire extinguisher, and quickly doused the flames on both cars.

Stilley, a former HM1 and emergency medical technician, provided first aid on the two trapped individuals, soliciting assistance from bystanders, until paramedics arrived. He then assisted in transporting the injured individuals to the local hospital.

"I don't feel that I did anything special. I was just in the right place at the right time," Stilley said.

By LTJG Chris O'Donnell, NH Newport, RI

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Headline: NH Bremerton Staff Recognized by Federal Executive Board

NH Bremerton--Eleven Navy employees at Naval Hospital Bremerton, WA, received "Celebration of Public Service" awards from the area's Federal Executive Board (FEB). Recipients of these prestigious regional awards are:

- Michelle Abutin, secretary for the directorate of surgery, for her exceptional work as volunteer chair for 1995's Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month events and other volunteer activities at the hospital.

- Nancy Allpress, para-legal specialist in the legal department, for her volunteer work with the Kitsap Sexual Assault Center.

- Patricia Troutner, contracting officer in the materials management department, for her volunteer work with the Kitsap County Health District AIDS program. In addition

to being recognized by the FEB, she was selected as the Kitsap County Public Health Volunteer-of-the-Year.

The fourth recognition award went to the entire managed care department and its eight civilian employees. The department flawlessly enrolled more than 50,000 Navy medical beneficiaries into TRICARE, allowing easy access to health care in the Bremerton area.

By Judith A. Williams, Naval Hospital Bremerton Public Affairs Officer

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Headline: TRICARE Question and Answers

Q. Where do I call to get information about TRICARE?

A. If you have questions about your military health care benefits under TRICARE, there are many places to get answers. Each medical facility has a Health Benefits Advisor, Managed Care Office, or TRICARE Service Center. This should be your first contact for information. Additionally, here's a listing of the Regions that are already on line and their telephone numbers were you can call to get information:

Region 2 -- NC, most of VA: 1-800-990-8272

Region 3 -- SC, GA, FL excluding panhandle:
1-800-444-5445

Region 4 -- FL panhandle, AL, MS, TN, eastern third of LA:
1-800-444-5445

Region 6 -- OK, AR, western two-thirds of LA, TX excluding southwest corner: 1-800-406-2833

Region 9 -- Southern CA: 1-800-242-6788

Region 10 -- Northern CA: 1-800-242-6788

Region 11 -- WA, OR, and northern counties of ID:
1-800-982-0032

Region 12 -- Hawaii: 1-800-242-6788

Toll-free numbers will be established for Regions 1, 2, 5, 7, and 8 when TRICARE becomes operational there.

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Headline: Healthwatch: How to Beat the Summer Heat

(AFPS)--Summer has arrived. It's hot, it's humid, the sun is beating down. And that means it's time to take extra care when spending time outdoors, whether it's for work or play.

"If you're supervising Sailors and Marines outdoors in the heat, you need to plan a rotational schedule for them, get them out of the heat and into a cool environment," said CDR Mark C. Olesen, MC, USN, director of organizational development at the Navy Environmental Health Center in Norfolk, VA. "In really hot temperatures, over 90 degrees, they also need to drink a lot of water -- at least two quarts an hour."

Olesen said this advice pertains especially to service members training in closed-in areas, such as the cab of a vehicle, and on hot surfaces, such as flight lines and carrier decks. These service members and employees

especially need to drink a lot of water.

It also applies to off-duty activities, especially to athletic events like soccer, softball and running. The heat of competition often makes people ignore their bodies' demands.

"If you know you're going to be out competing in the heat, start drinking water early and keep replenishing yourself," said Sgt. Henry Harris of the Walter Reed Army Medical Center Preventive Medicine Office in Washington, DC. "Listen to your body and help cool it."

Harris also emphasized knowing heat injury symptoms. "You have to keep an eye on your people, and that means knowing what to look for and taking the steps to prevent or treat injuries," he said.

There are three types of heat injuries -- heat cramps, heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

The symptom of heat cramps is cramps accompanied by excessive sweating. Treatment is easy: move into a shaded area, loosen clothes and slowly drink water.

Heat exhaustion is more serious. Besides the cramps, sweating is more profuse and leaves cool, moist skin. Victims often suffer headaches, nausea, chills and a loss of appetite.

Heat stroke victims usually have hot, dry skin; have stopped sweating; and suffer from head-aches, dizziness, stomach pains and nausea. In severe cases, victims may have seizures, lose consciousness and experience breathing problems.

In both heat exhaustion and heat stroke cases, immediately call medical authorities. While waiting for help, provide the victim water and shade, elevate feet to prevent shock and cool the body by pouring water over the patient and by fanning.

Other suggestions for preventing heat injuries: Don't take salt tablets. The body may lose salt in sweating, but eating normal meals replenishes that supply. Drink cool water, preferably 50 to 55 degrees Fahrenheit. Drink one quart of water in the morning, at each meal and before strenuous work. Water requirements vary with climatic conditions and workloads.

Smaller, frequent drinks are more effective than drinking the same amount all at once. When possible, limit work and physical fitness activities during the first few days of exposure to heat, then increase gradually to acclimate. Modify activities if conditions are present that increase heat injury risks. These conditions include fatigue or loss of sleep, previous heat exhaustion and taking medications.

By MSGT Stephen Barrett, USA, Armed Forces Press Service, and Bureau of Medicine and Surgery